

GETTING MY ATTENTION

The Super Bowl's commercials have become nearly as big a draw as the game itself. According to *Prosper Insights and Analytics*, 17.7% of adults say that advertisements are the most important part of the event. The TV broadcast presents a golden opportunity for marketers to reach more than 100 million Americans (114 million tuned in last year), and such an opportunity does not come cheap.

According to *Variety*, Fox is charging marketers anywhere between \$5 million and \$5.5 million for a 30-second ad this year.

Last year 62 total paying advertisements ran during the telecast. Forty-five of those were 30-second spots and 17 ran for a full minute. If there's a similar number of 30-seconders this year, Fox could bring in up to \$247.5 million just from 30-second ads. Not a bad day at the office.

<http://www.si.com/nfl/2017/01/26/super-bowl-commercial-cost-2017>

The expectations for originality, humor, glitz, celebrity, boldness, audaciousness and much more are high for Super Bowl commercials.
Purchasers of those spots have to pack a lot of "bang" in just 30 seconds or 1 minute.

FOCUSING MY ATTENTION

When the apostle Paul arrived in Corinth, he was well aware of the expectations of his audience. What appealed to the Corinthians? Well, not the glimmer and glitz of a well-prepared 30 second or 1 minute spot. What appealed to the Corinthians of Greece was "lofty speech" and profound "wisdom". For the Corinthians, lacking in the technology of the 21st century, what the speaker was unable to do with a high tech audio-visual presentation, he was expected to make up with his oratory skills and entertaining verbal illustrations. If a "picture paints a thousand words", then in the absence of the picture, the thousand words offered in its place must rise to their high expectations.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

What's more important, the players on the field and the game, or, the commercials on the TV screen between the action plays on the field? You know the answer the players on the field would give! And, you also know the answer the businesses buying the commercial time would give! Not the same as the players, for sure!

The apostle Paul was making the same point!

What's more important, the content of the message he was delivering? Or, the style, the oratory skill and appeal in which it was delivered?

STYLE OR SUBSTANCE?

Those who listened to Paul and were evaluating his style, his oratory skills and comparing it to the great orators of the Greek philosophers, would certainly find Paul disappointing and falling far short of their expectations.

Those who listened to Paul and were subjecting the content of his message to a comparison and contrast with the content of the Greek philosophers and the human wisdom they expounded, would also be disappointed in Paul and in the message he proclaimed.

However, those who listened to Paul, focusing on the content of his message, on the substance of what he was proclaiming, with the understanding that they were being enlightened by a wisdom not of men, but of the Holy Spirit, – they would not only approve of what Paul was teaching, but they would be enriched with "the mind of Christ".

CLEARING THE OBSTACLES OR OBFUSCATING THE CLEAR?

So that the Corinthians who listened to Paul might not be distracted by style, by "lofty speech", entertaining stories, eloquent illustrations, Paul put that aside.

¹And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.

²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

³And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,

⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

⁵so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Our society is really not that different than the one in Corinth.

The diverse and competing philosophies, the "wisdom" of the day, where all about understanding the world and how best to live in the world. You can go into any secular book store today, or in the book and magazine section in Walmart or other similar stores, or search online at Amazon or other web outlets, and find all sorts of "self improvement" books or programs, all sorts of "techniques and disciplines", on how to live your life and find happiness and fulfillment in life.

But, no amount of "self-improvement" programs, techniques, or disciplines will lead you to what you do need most in life!

They will all come up short! Way short!

None matter if they are presented in a high-tech DVD video series, or in a colorful, glossy, well designed, visual appealing guide or book, or an online line, illustrated, step by step, click by click, web experience, None will provide you with **what you do need most in life!**

WHAT GOD HAS PROVIDED!

So as to be clear, direct, and without any distraction, Paul told the Corinthians,

²*For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

What the Corinthians, what you and I, what all people need most in life is Christ!

**No amount of “self-improvement” can erase our sins,
all the harmful, hateful, abusive, painful words we have said, things we have done,
against God and against others.**

A perfect future does not erase an imperfect past!

Not that anyone can attain perfection in the future

through any “self-improvement” program, technique or discipline.

No human wisdom has yet been conceived,

nor is there a human wisdom that can be conceived,

that can do what God in Christ has done for mankind!

Paul’s message was a proclamation,
a making known of what God conceived and planned in eternity, before creation,
to be revealed in Christ!

⁷*But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God,
which God decreed before the ages for our glory.*

You see, God foreknew that man would sin, would fall short of His righteous glory!

Once that happened, once man sinned,

man on his own could never regain what he lost.

*“All the kings horses and all the kings men,
could never put humpty dumpty together again!”*

God, however, had His Plan, known only to God Himself,

of how He would restore His “glory” in man, that man might be righteous again.

No one but God alone knew the Plan!

When the devil deceived Eve, who in turn led Adam into sin,
the devil thought he had corrupted man once and for all.

All the descendants of Adam and Eve were lost to God
and under his evil rule, captive in his dark domain.

**Through the centuries, God revealed a few details about His Plan,
enough to give hope and comfort to the lost descendants of Adam,
but not enough for the devil to discover and defeat God’s Plan.**

When the devil led the religious leaders of Israel to plot against Jesus,
and when the devil led Pontius Pilate to condemn Jesus,
the devil thought he had defeated God’s Plan for Jesus to rule over His Kingdom.

But the devil was wrong!

Instead of defeating God’s Plan,

the devil brought about the most essential part of God’s Plan!

In the innocent, sufferings and death of Jesus,

Jesus bore the sins of the world and received God’s wrath against man’s sin.

⁷*But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God,
which God decreed before the ages for our glory.*

⁸*None of the rulers (evil spiritual forces) of this age understood this,
for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

Once Jesus rose from the dead, defeating death itself,
the devil’s hold on man was ended!

Man was no longer captive to sin and judgment!

In Christ, man’s “Debt” for sin was paid!

In Christ, man could receive the credit for Jesus’ righteous life!

Man does not need “self-improvement”!

God offers “Christ-improvement”!

God’s Plan accomplished in Christ was for our “Glory”!

God’s Plan in Christ leaves us “Debt Free” and “Glory Bound”!

**In the New Heavens and New Earth, where God’s children will live in “Glory”
in their resurrected bodies, God will fully restore His “Glory” in us!**

⁹*But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love Him”*

— ¹⁰*these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.*

In no way could man conceive of God’s Plan for restoring His “Glory” in man!

In Christ and through the Holy Spirit, God has revealed His “Plan” for “our glory”!

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE!

We heard earlier, 1 out of 6 people (17.7%) said

that the commercials “are the most important part” of the Super Bowl.

WOW! Is that true? For 1 out of 6 people apparently so!

What pressure on the advertising agencies and those paying millions of dollars

for those 30 second or 1 minute spots during the game!

It’s amazing what will be done in the brief amount of time

to promote a can of soda or beer,

to arouse interest in a car or truck,

to elevate a pizza or sub sandwich, a burger or bucket of chicken.

**When you walk through the church doors, receive a bulletin from the ushers,
sit in the pew, open the hymnal and look toward the altar before you,**

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

You have to answer that question in your mind and in your heart!

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

I can’t answer that question for you! No one can but you!

What I can tell you, is

WHAT GOD HAS PROVIDED!

God Has Provided:

Christ Crucified for you!

Christ Crucified to pay your “Debt” for sin!

Christ Crucified for your “Glory”!

God doesn’t need a million dollar advertising budget or spot to sell Christ Crucified!

What God offers in **Christ Crucified** money cannot buy,

not because it is worthless, but because it is priceless!

And, because **Christ Crucified** is priceless, no one could afford to buy Him.

So, God gives away, free, what **Christ Crucified** has purchased with His blood!

That leaves you with one question, every day, every time you sit in worship before God:...

Are You Looking For... What God Has Provided! AMEN